



A message to the faithful of the archdiocese from Archbishop Michael Jackels

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Archbishop comments on recent sexual abuse scandals

Overwhelmed. Disheartened. Ashamed. And at a loss as to an adequate response. Those are some of my reactions to recent accounts of...

...sexual abuse of children, young people, and vulnerable adults, perpetrated by the likes of team doctors, coaches, and clergy, here in the USA and elsewhere.

...the failure of people in charge, especially bishops, to hear accusers, to act on allegations, and to remove those who are predators from access to potential victims.

With regard to clergy, I feel the need to state that the vast majority is good and faithful, and does so much to help us on the way to heaven. Thanks be to God.

Moreover, I feel the need to state that there is nothing inherent in an all-male clergy, or mandatory celibacy, or diocesan priests living alone that is the cause of this problem.

I also believe that the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People, and all that it requires, is good and effective at doing all that is humanly possible to prevent sexual abuse of minors by clergy.

It is likely that the meeting of US bishops this November will take steps towards providing for oversight of the bishops themselves, and a process for complaints against them.

What else might be done? Here's a partial list:

Prayer for conversion, which is the work of the Spirit, with each person cooperating with Divine grace.

Do penance to make amends for past sins, as well as training ourselves to resist the selfishness of sin.

Affirm the teaching of Christ and his Catholic Church about the human person, sexuality, marriage, and family; it may not be easy, and may involve sacrifice, but it ennobles individuals and society.

Promote marriage in the Church, with husband and wife persevering and faithful in good and bad times, and raising a family where the practice of faith is part of home life, but also providing all the help that can be given to single-parent families.

Be vigilant, like a watchdog, warning and protecting against people with evil intent.

Cling to hope, for Jesus has already conquered sin, even though we may have a long and winding road before we can enjoy the victory.

As a Church, we are committed to do all that is humanly possible to promote healing, restore trust, and create a safe environment for children, young people, and vulnerable adults to participate in Church life. And if something falls through the cracks in spite of our commitment and efforts, we are resolved to act swiftly and resolutely to make the correction.

Please be a partner in this effort. May God have mercy on us and help us.

Michael Jackels

Archbishop of Dubuque